PRESS RELEASE

Ombudsman examines operational arrangements for statutory visits under Justices of the Peace Visit Programme

The Ombudsman, Ms Winnie Chiu, today (15 July) announced the launch of a direct investigation to examine the operational arrangements for statutory visits under the Justices of the Peace Visit Programme (JP Visit Programme).

Ms Chiu said, “Justices of the Peace (JPs) conduct statutory visits at designated institutions pursuant to the Justices of the Peace Ordinance and other relevant legislation. The JP Visit Programme serves as one of the important and independent channels for persons in custody, detained or hospitalised to express their views and lodge complaints. It also serves as a platform for JPs to make comments and suggestions on ways to improve the facilities and service management of the institutions. The Government conducted a review of the JP system, including the JP Visit Programme in 1999. We are launching this direct investigation to examine the operation of and arrangements for JP statutory visits, including the support provided by the relevant departments before and during JP visits and the follow-up actions afterwards. We would make recommendations for improvement to the Government where necessary.”

The JP Visit Programme is administered by the Administration Wing of the Chief Secretary for Administration’s Office. JP statutory visits now cover 38 institutions, including correctional institutions of the Correctional Services Department, detention centres of the Immigration Department and the Independent Commission Against Corruption, psychiatric hospitals of the Hospital Authority, as well as remand homes, places of refuge, probation homes and reformatory schools of the Social Welfare Department. JPs visit these institutions on a fortnightly, monthly or quarterly basis so as to discharge their statutory visit functions.

The Ombudsman now invites members of the public and concern groups to provide information and views on this topic. Written submissions should reach the Office of The Ombudsman by 15 August 2021:

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